



# New San Mateo Bridge Brings Relief to Bay Area Commuters

The new San Mateo-Hayward bridge has opened, providing congestion relief to thousands of motorists who each day navigate one of the worst transportation bottlenecks in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The \$200 million project included construction of a 4.7-mile-long structure, north of the existing “flat” or “trestle” part of the bridge. The new section ties into the existing “high rise” portion of the bridge. With the new westbound trestle portion open to traffic, there will be three full lanes with shoulders serving traffic each way between Alameda and Santa Mateo counties when work on the eastbound lanes is completed in February.

The lanes help to smooth traffic flow, and the shoulders provide a pull-out area for stranded vehicles.

An average of 87,000 vehicles a day cross the bridge from the East Bay to work on the Peninsula and Silicon Valley. That number is expected to grow



*Above: Smoother flowing commutes await daily travelers thanks to completion of the new San Mateo Bridge. Left: Marking the completion are (from left) San Mateo Mayor Sue Lempert, Sen. Liz Figueroa, D-Fremont, and Petaluma Councilmember Pamela Torliatt.*

Photos by John Huseby (D-4)

to more than 95,000 vehicles daily in a little more than 10 years.

A new toll plaza was built with three new booths just east of the existing toll plaza to provide 10 booths for motorists, which will help ease the morning commute backup. All toll booths are equipped with Fastrak, the electronic toll collection system, to improve access to the bridge and ease morning commute time for vehicles equipped with transponders.

The project also provides a new pedestrian overcrossing for pedestrians and bicyclists to safely cross Highway 92 east of the bridge so they may access park and recreation areas along the East Bay shoreline. Bicyclists will also be able to cross the bridge on a shuttle several times a day. Previously, there was no direct connection for pedestrians and bicyclists across the highway.

**San Mateo Bridge** *cont. on page 4*

# ‘Seamless Transportation’ Debuts Along South Coast

Travelers on the south coast have been given a glimpse of the seamless transportation system of the future.

Thanks to a program initiated by the Davis Administration, Amtrak and Metrolink riders with either a Metrolink or a Pacific Surfliner monthly ticket can ride any Pacific Surfliner or Metrolink train serving an area stretching from Oceanside to Ventura County. In addition, for a limited time, Southwest Airline passengers can ride either train for free between the Burbank Airport Station and downtown Los Angeles.

“It’s all about convenience and how we can best serve the customers,” said Eric Schatmeier, chief of the Marketing Branch in Caltrans’ Division of Rail.

“This program gives the traveler more options.”

In September, the first month of the Rail 2 Rail program, nearly 10,000 Metrolink passengers rode Pacific Surfliner trains, a five-fold increase over the previous year.

Under the Rail 2 Rail program, customers purchasing a monthly Metrolink pass can ride either Metrolink or Pacific Surfliner trains within the limits of the pass.

Take the case of the rider in Oceanside who buys a monthly pass on Metrolink to downtown Los Angeles. Before, the pass was only good for the Metrolink train even though a Pacific Surfliner train, which covers the same

route, might be more convenient. Now, that pass is good on all Metrolink and Pacific Surfliner trains running between Oceanside and downtown Los Angeles.

“The customers don’t care about the name on the train. By making it simpler, easier and more convenient, we ultimately make rail travel a more popular transportation option for more people,” said Schatmeier. The same handy option holds for Amtrak monthly ticket holders wishing to ride Metrolink.

In addition to the Rail 2 Rail program, between September and November, Metrolink and the Pacific Surfliner teamed up with Southwest Airlines to provide free rail service between the

Burbank Airport Station and Union Station to Southwest passengers holding valid airline tickets.

“The Rail 2 Rail partnership is not just about getting people to Los Angeles or to the airport. It’s about getting people to the places they need and want to be,” Schatmeier said.

Nearly 400,000 people a month ride Metrolink and Pacific Surfliner trains along the south coast. Last year, the two services carried more than 4 million passengers.

Caltrans contracts with Amtrak to operate 11 daily roundtrip Pacific Surfliner trains. Four of these travel north of Los Angeles to Santa Barbara and serve Burbank Airport.

# New Highway Improves Mobility in Sierra Community

The streets of downtown Truckee, overwhelmed over the past 20 years by a growing stream of traffic taking advantage of the recreational bounty of the Sierra Nevada, have been reclaimed.

In late October, Caltrans and the local community officially opened the new 1.8-mile-long segment of Highway 267, better known as the Truckee Bypass, providing a large dose of relief for the congestion-clogged streets of this historic old railroad and lumber town.

“It is the right medicine,” said Bob Burton, Caltrans District 3 Resident Engineer for the Truckee Bypass project. “The bypass takes traffic off the downtown streets and saves time for motorists traveling between Interstate



*Spanning the Truckee River and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, a new 1,500-foot bridge will allow traffic on Highway 267 to bypass downtown Truckee.*

Photo by Don Tateishi

80, North Lake Tahoe and the surrounding resorts.”

The relief will be welcomed by residents and visitors alike. It is not uncommon for a combination of tourists, skiers and stoppages caused by the railroad moving trains through Truckee to back up traffic from the north approximately a mile to Interstate 80 and from the south as far as two miles to the Truckee Airport.

The \$33.5 million bypass project includes a new interchange with Interstate 80, which is due for completion next spring, and a 1,500-foot-long bridge to carry the highway over the Truckee River, Glenshire Drive and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

The new bypass will route traffic on Highway 267 east of Truckee,

saving drivers up to 30 minutes that it would routinely take to navigate the town’s streets on busy weekends.

Design features of the new bypass include an earthen berm to minimize highway noise for nearby homes and roadside settlement basins designed to protect the Truckee River. Huge boulders unearthed during excavation were also incorporated into the alpine landscape.

In addition, Caltrans District 3 and the town of Truckee were able to develop a plan to keep the existing on-ramp from Highway 89 and the exit for Donner Pass Road (Old Highway 267) open.

An average of more than 16,000 vehicles a day travel Highway 267 through the heart of Truckee.



DIRECTOR'S CORNER



Director Jeff Morales

Over the last two-and-a-half years, the department has been working hard to broadcast a clear message. We have been focusing on increasing mobility across California and we are succeeding with imaginative and innovative strategies.

We all have a sense of the stakes. It is a major challenge to keep up with growth in this state. Right now, every eighth American lives in the Golden State. However, by 2025, California will grow to 54 million residents, which would be the equivalent of the entire state of New York packing up and

## The Word's Getting Out: We're Aiming at Delivery

moving here. We will become home to more than 30 million vehicles.

Yet, at the same, we are called upon to maintain the unique lifestyle of this state — one of the most important reasons that people have moved here in the first place, and then chosen to stay here with their children and grandchildren.

Over the last 30 months, I have had a chance to visit many regions of California, to tell our story and to see what Caltrans and its regional transportation partners are doing to accomplish the job.

And I can tell you this: from the Sierra Nevada region to the Bay Area and from Eureka on the north coast to the Inland Empire and San Diego in the south, we are making a difference. We are seeing a more balanced and multi-modal transportation system. We are increasing mobility while maintaining environmental sensitivity. And we are creating jobs and helping to prime California's economic pump.

We have more than \$7 billion in work underway on our transportation system. One of every five miles in the State Highway System is undergoing improvement. Commuting times are

dropping in some of the state's most congested traffic areas.

Consider a few examples.

In October, we completed a \$41 million carpool lane project on Highway 50 just east of Sacramento that will cut up to 25 minutes off the daily commute times between the growing communities of eastern Sacramento County or the Sierra Nevada foothills into the Capitol City. The project was delivered six weeks early and within budget.

The nearly 90,000 vehicles to travel along Highway 92 between the East Bay and Silicon Valley will have a much easier commute with the recent completion of an expanded San Mateo-Hayward Bridge. The \$200 million project increased from four to six the number of lanes stretching across the southern part of the San Francisco Bay. New shoulders provide for pullout lanes for stranded vehicles. And a new overcrossing allows pedestrians and bicyclists to have better access to the recreational facilities at the Bay's shore.

Work has begun on seven related transportation improvements in the Redding area — including Highways 273 and 299 and Interstate 5. The

combined projects, valued at more than \$83 million, are expected to make travel for Redding commuters and visitors safer, more convenient and comfortable.

This summer in the Los Angeles area, Caltrans, Amtrak, Metrolink and Southwest Airlines announced the Rail 2 Rail program, which allows Metrolink and Pacific Surfliner ticket-holders to ride either system.

And Southwest for a limited time gave its riders free Metrolink or Pacific Surfliner trips to Union Station in downtown Los Angeles. The program was one more step in making rail and mass transit a good alternative to the automobile in the busy southland area.

The projects cited here are some recent examples of what we are doing on the California transportation system. Because of the resources we have through the Governor's transportation initiative, including the \$5.3 billion Traffic Congestion Relief Program, we can expect to see a busy schedule of projects delivered in coming months.

And although the word is getting out on our powerful new delivery program, our actions speak even louder than our words.

## Innovative Construction Process Gives Sierra County Travelers New Roadway in Less Time

Sierra County has been given the cold shoulder — and a new highway.

Using a construction technique new to the Golden State, Caltrans District 3 was able to reconstruct 18.5 lane-miles of Highway 89 with shoulders through the Sierra Valley in 15 working days.

District 3 engineers employed the cold-foam, in-place recycling process on a portion of the two-lane highway stretching from the junction of Highways 89 and 49 to the Sierra/Plumas County line. When construction crews picked up the cones in mid-August, the people of Sierra County had the equivalent of a new road.

"We built a new road from the bottom up in a matter of weeks," said Joe Peterson, materials engineer for Caltrans' North Region. "Using the normal process, we estimated the work would have required approximately 100 working days and could have stretched into two construction seasons."

At an elevation of more than 5,000 feet and battered by the severe winter weather of the surrounding Sierra Nevada, Highway 89 is one of those roads that presents ongoing challenges for Caltrans maintenance crews because of the roadway's highly distressed pavement (base failure, rutting, severe alligator cracking and potholes).

Pavement repairs on Highway 89 are a normal rite of summer for Caltrans Maintenance Supervisor Dan Ramirez and his Sierraville maintenance crew.

"It's an annual activity. We know each summer we are going to have to go in, dig out the bad sections and make the repairs. It's gotten to the point depending on how severe the winter is that we can predict where the trouble spots will be. What's needed is a major reconstruction," Ramirez said.



Photo by Don Tateishi

*Highway 89 in Sierra County is once again in tip-top shape thanks to a cold-foam repaving project completed in 15 days.*

Given its location and relatively light traffic volume (about 2,000 vehicles a day), it is difficult for Highway 89 to compete successfully with other highway pavement needs around the state for funding to reconstruct the road. The Sierraville crew is left with making temporary repairs year after year.

Enter Peterson and the cold-foam technique.

District 3 had conducted a test of the cold foam process on Highway 20 in Colusa County last year and was looking for another location to try a more extensive demonstration of the technique.

"Highway 89 is an ideal location. It is a two-lane road with a manageable

traffic volume. Given its location, severity of its winter and the large logging trucks that use the route, this highway offers Caltrans engineers a great opportunity to use the cold-foam process and monitor the performance of the pavement," Peterson said.

The cold foam process recycles 100 percent of the existing asphalt concrete and a portion of the existing base material. The foam process consists of injecting a small amount of cold water into a chamber of hot bitumen. This creates a controlled reaction within the chamber, similar to adding a drop of water to oil in a hot frying pan. The foam is then forced out of the chamber onto the fine dust-like material in the recycler-mixing drum.

This mixture is then shaped to cross slope and grade with a grader and compacted. Motorists can drive on

the compacted material immediately after the final compaction and for up to 14 days with no impact to the material or traffic with the exception of reduced speeds.

"Using a conservative design approach, we estimate a structural section design life of 6 to 10 years for the eight-inch foamed section capped with two inches of asphalt concrete," Peterson said.

The result is a smooth riding road that is less prone to cracking.

"So far, so good," said Ramirez.

John Anderson, District 3 resident engineer for the project, said one benefit of the process is the efficiency of construction. The work is continuous

and can be completed in a much quicker time. We reduce the delay to the motorists and time workers are exposed to traffic."

Even though traffic volumes on Highway 89 are lighter than some other routes, there is no detour so every minute saved reduces the inconvenience to motorists. Delays during the 15-day construction period averaged between 5 and 10 minutes.

Using the conventional capital maintenance process of approximately 20 percent dig outs and a maximum three-inch overlay, the Highway 89 job would have required 30-45 working days.

"The question now is how will the material hold up," said Peterson.

To help answer that question, district engineers are calling in the heavy artillery — the department's heavy vehicle simulator. The vehicle will be placed on one of the newly paved turnouts and simulate how the roadway will respond under a continuous 18,000-pound axle load.

"We are confident that the process will pass the test and that will give our engineers another tool in our tool box when repairing worn out pavements," Peterson said.

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# Interchange Improvements Produce Big Time Savings for Bay Area Motorists

MILPITAS – Motorists traveling to and from the Silicon Valley have been given an extra 20 minutes thanks to the completion of the new \$67 million interchange connecting Highway 237 and Interstate 880.

“Our estimates predicted that motorists would save about 20 minutes and that has proven to be right on,” said Ray Balallo, Caltrans District 4 Resident Engineer for the 237/880 project, in the weeks after the project was opened to traffic in mid-September.

Two direct freeway-to-freeway connectors were built to replace outdated ramps between Interstate 880 and Highway 237 in northern Santa Clara County. Furthermore, the interchange was designed with freeway-to-freeway ramp meters that will help smooth traffic flow between the two facilities. The Highway 237/Interstate 880 connection is one of

the busiest freeway interchanges in the San Francisco Bay Area carry-

ing upwards of 250,000 vehicles a day from Alameda, Contra Costa, San Joaquin and Santa Clara counties.

The interchange was designed to separate freeway traffic from local street traffic while providing more direct connections between the two freeways. The project design also accommodates future construction of high-occupancy vehicle direct connectors and the future widening of Interstate 880 to 10 lanes north of the interchange. These HOV lanes will provide 26 miles of continuous carpool capacity on Interstate 880 when the Route 262/Warren Avenue interchange is completed in 2007.

“This new freeway-to-freeway connector will make a big difference for commuters between Alameda County and the Silicon Valley. Milpitas is considered to

be the ‘Gateway to the Silicon Valley’ and the improved mobility will benefit the many high-tech companies and their employees headquartered in this area,” said Balallo.

For Balallo, a 14-year veteran of Caltrans, the 237/880 project was both personally and professionally satisfying.

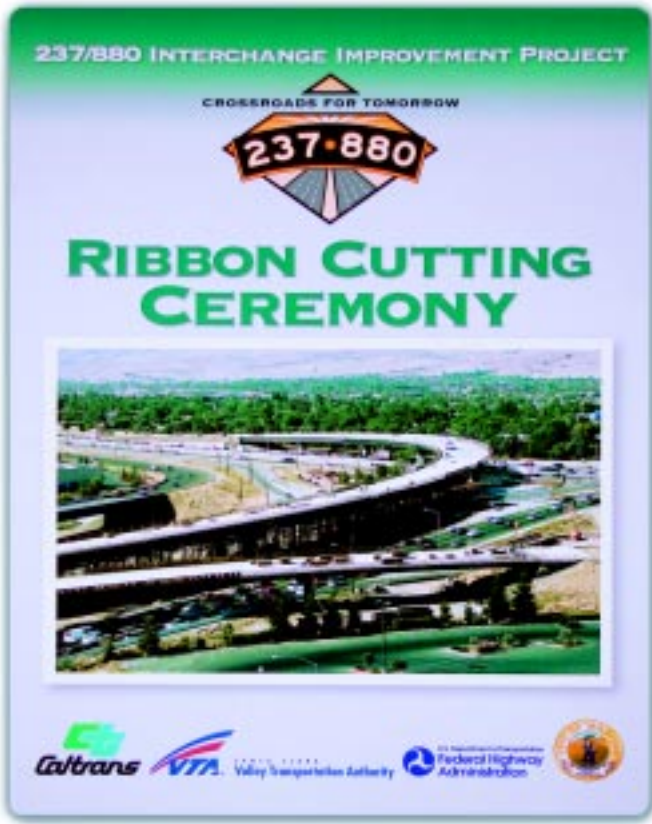
“Each project I work on is special. We faced some tough challenges here like balancing the needs of the traffic while keeping construction on schedule,” he said.

As a resident of Milpitas, Balallo had a definite personal stake in making sure the project stayed on track.

“All during the construction, my friends would ask me about the job and when it would be done,” Balallo laughed. “Now, that it is open and working beautifully, I want them to bring the subject up.”

Balallo worked on the project for nearly all four years of the construction.

The 237/880-interchange project was a joint effort of the state, the federal government, the City of Milpitas and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.



## From the Mailbox

### Quick Thinking Aids Traveler in Distress

The following letter was sent to District 10 Director Mark Leja:

*On Monday, August 12, in the morning, my parents and I were preparing to do some fishing at Caples Lake in Alpine County. My mother sat down near the lake and shortly later, wanted to get up. She was unable to pull herself up, temporarily paralyzed and eventually, briefly lost consciousness. No telephones were available close by to call 911, however, the angels must have been looking out for my family. Nearby a group of Caltrans' employees (all men) were working and glad to offer assistance. Someone called for an ambulance, and everyone was so kind, concerned, and sensitive to my mother's welfare, suffering, and possible fear of the unknown during the waiting period. The ambulance finally arrived to take my mother to Barton Memorial Hospital in Lake Tahoe. Alas, she was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. Subsequently, my mother had an operation and is now recuperating at home.*

*Although my mother received good service and treatment from the doctors and other medical staff of a Bay Area hospital, I strongly believe the initial and immediate response and care are crucial and vital to all patients' comfort and chance for a less traumatic outcome, such as an aggravated illness/disease, negative mental and emotional well-being, and possibly fatality.*

*The men working in the vicinity of Caples Lake were truly outstanding in immediately responding to a dire situation and showing their support and compassion. Because of my being distraught and concerned over my mother's unexpected illness and the quick turn of events, I forgot to obtain the names of the gentlemen.*

*On behalf of my family, I give my warmest and deepest appreciation to all the Caltrans' employees working at Caples Lake that day and giving their wonderful assistance to our mother. Please pass on the contents or a copy of this letter to the affected individuals, and our heartfelt THANKS!*

Janet T. Mayeda

### Tow Truck Driver Rides to Rescue

*I would like to commend the Dept. of Transportation and the California Highway Patrol.*

*On Sunday, September 29 my daughter, her three children and I took an excursion from Sacramento, our home, to San Francisco for the day. The traffic was moderately heavy, but smooth.*

*As we were crossing the Carquinez Bridge, in the fast lane, at the approximate speed of 65 miles per hour the left front tire of our vehicle blew out. The auto has front wheel drive and the confusion, smoke from the tire and our utter panic caused quite an uproar. The hubcap flew off, never to be seen again, the tire was smoking and making a terrible noise.*

*My immediate thought was the traffic behind us. My daughter was able to control the car, put on the hazard lights and started to exit on the right. It may have been one minute, but probably more like 30 seconds and a highway patrolman, on a motorcycle, pulled up behind us and escorted to safety at the end of the pylons.*

*He came along side to make sure we were safe and told us he had called a tow truck. In about 10 minutes we were so glad to see a big, beautiful orange and white Caltrans tow truck. The driver, we did not get his name, but his hard hat said "Bailey", was so nice to us and concerned for our well being. He changed the tire and put the correct air pressure in the other tires. He was courteous, well informed and very professional. Much to our surprise we were told that there would be no charge for this superior service, that it was provided by Caltrans.*

*Well, what can I say? Thank you for saving our lives, thank you for being there. Your organization is obviously run in a very professional, caring way and your employees are entitled to kudos.*

*Thank you again,*

*Jeannette Jourdan    Office Services Supervisor, Department of Real Estate*

## Online Time Reporting Up and Running

A new online time reporting system is now up and running for more than 1,300 employees who are part of Caltrans' Headquarters division. In the coming months, more than 18,000 employees who have been reporting their time in TRS and on paper timesheets will go online to report their time.

The new system will improve access, accuracy and timeliness of time reporting information. It will also monitor and manage License & Certification requirements and Workers' Compensation cases. The TOPSS (Transportation Operations and Project Support System) project team, represented by Administration, Human Resources and Information Technology, developed the new system.

The TOPSS project sparked the creation of Staff Central, an innovative Intranet portal that will provide employees with important tools, resources and information.

Staff Central is located at [onramp.dot.ca.gov/hq/staffcentral](http://onramp.dot.ca.gov/hq/staffcentral). Internet Explorer Web browser is required to view training and report time in the new system.

Timed to coincide with the rollout, the Division of Human Resources initiated a project to reconcile employees' leave balances prior to converting to the new system. Information Bulletin (PIB) 02-05, Accurate Leave Balance Project, contains information regarding this special project and the reconciliation schedule.

The November rollout to Headquarters division employees in Administration, Accounting, Information Technology and Research & Innovation follows the successful implementation of the new system in the Maintenance Division in September.

The rollout schedule for the entire department can be found on the Staff Central portal under Project Updates.

## Caltrans Award Winners

The following Caltrans employees have earned Sustained Superior Accomplishment (SSA), Superior – Gold and Superior – Silver awards to be presented in November. The SSA is given to employees for superior job performance over a two-year period, resulting in an exceptional contribution to the efficiency of state government. The superior award recognizes exceptional contributions to improving state government.

### Superior Accomplishment – Gold

**Stephen Diaz**, District 6, SSM I, Small Business Manager

### Superior Accomplishment – Silver

**Sandra Huddleston**, District 6, Associate Caltrans Administrator, Small Business Outreach

### Sustained Superior Accomplishment

**Samuel Farrington**, Business, Facilities, Asset Management & Security

**Vince Zorn**, District 5, Maintenance Mechanic

## California Projects Earn National Recognition

Caltrans received two Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) awards at the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) annual meeting last month in Anchorage, Alaska.

FHWA annually honors Excellence in Highway Design from transportation projects across the nation.

The new Martinez Amtrak Station in Contra Costa County won an award in the Intermodal Facilities category. The City of Martinez is the owner of the station that is served daily by 8 San Joaquin trains, 18 Capitol Corridor trains and 2 Coast Starlight and California Zephyr long distance trains. The

station also provides motorcoach connections as far north as Humboldt County and as far east as Reno/Lake Tahoe.

The I-15/40th Street Freeway Project in San Diego received an honorable mention award in the Urban Highway category. The project was the last segment of I-15 in California to be brought up to

freeway standards. The I-15/40th Street project sports some unique construction features including lighting, retaining walls and landscaping.

The project is a perfect example of how context sensitivity can enhance the community while providing needed transportation improvements.



**San Mateo Bridge** *cont. from page 1*

Rick Morrow, Supervising Bridge Engineer in charge of the San Mateo construction, said the work plan was developed to minimize the impact on the surrounding sensitive environment.

“Construction was done by the “over the top” method involving a continuously cycled temporary trestle section out front with pile driving done from the front edge, bent caps set within the length of the trestle and girders placed by crane from the trailing portion of the trestle. Fabricated precast elements were initially trucked to the site and later brought by barge once deep enough water was encountered,” Morrow said.

The project began in January 2000 and was completed in early November, two months earlier than the three-year estimated time. Working six days a week, construction crews built 270 feet of new bridge every week.

The new trestle section consists of 90-foot-long spans of “bulb T” girders.

The existing bridge, which opened in 1967, earned the American Society of Civil Engineer’s “Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement” and the American Institute of Steel Construction’s “Most Beautiful Bridge-Long Span” award.

The new bridge was funded through Regional Measure 1, approved by Bay Area voters in November 1988, which increased bridge tolls to \$1 to pay for critical bridge expansions.

Caltrans designed and constructed the widening. The Bay Area Toll Authority, whose members also serve on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), funded and oversaw the bridge widening. The MTC is the transportation planning, funding and coordinating agency for the nine Bay Area counties.

As part of the \$2.6 billion seismic retrofit program, both the high rise and flat sections of the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge received seismic retrofits during this widening.

Initial public reaction to the improvements have been very positive. Following are some e-mails received by Caltrans District 4.

*“It was a beautiful, clear morning, with the Bay Bridge visible to the north and the Dumbarton to the south. As I glided across the new San Mateo bridge I found myself humming “Ode to Joy”. A wider span. Three lanes and emergency shoulders. No more stalls or accidents freezing traffic. My hour-long commute has been shortened to fifty minutes, leaving me more time in the morning to spend with my wife and daughter.*

*Life is good.*

*Thank you Caltrans.”*

*“I just want to send my congratulations – and thanks – on the completion of the new west-bound span on the Hayward-San Mateo bridge. It’s been a real pleasure to watch the construction over these past months, and its even more of a pleasure to now be driving on it.”*

## Wine Making Engineer Garners Gold Medal at State Fair Competition

### “Dear Gold Medal Winner”

That’s the greeting Chuck Pazzi received when he opened his mail in August to learn that a wine he made received a gold medal at the California State Fair.

“I was surprised when I received the letter but I thought all along we had a good chance because we had a good wine,” said Pazzi, Caltrans Senior Bridge Engineer and Branch Chief of Preliminary Investigations in the Division of Structures.

Pazzi’s winning entry was a red Syrah wine made from grapes grown by Jim Sauber, retired Caltrans Senior Bridge Engineer and Design Branch Chief and Pazzi’s former boss in Bridge Design Section 7.

The three state fair judges awarded Pazzi’s wine a total of 52 points, a half point shy of a double gold honor, the highest award the wine could have received.

Pazzi, a native of Berkeley, became interested in wine making while studying civil engineering at the University of California, Davis in the mid 1980s.

Davis, a school steeped in a long agricultural heritage, offered classes in viticulture, the cultivation of grapes, and Pazzi eagerly signed up.

At the same time, Pazzi’s mother died of cancer and, to help ease that loss, Pazzi and his father, Ernest, “would take off to the Napa and Sonoma valleys to do some wine tasting and spend some time together. It helped us a lot to loosen up and relieve stress.”

Thanks in part to this special time with his father, Pazzi’s knowledge and tastes in wine improved. “After you taste the good wine, you can’t stomach the bargain stuff,” he laughed.

Three years ago, Pazzi with the encouragement of many of his friends, decided to make his own wine at the 40-acre homesite he owned in Sutter Creek, in the Mother Lode country southeast of Sacramento.

Pazzi, who was growing grapes on his property, developed his winning vintage from a half a ton of Syrah grapes from his friend Jim Sauber.

“My goal from the start was to make wine the old country way. It really becomes my personal wine,” said Pazzi.

Nowhere was that more evident than with his award winning wine. “Jim was very willing to give me the grapes as long as he received some of the wine. That was a great deal for me,” he said.

The attention to detail that Pazzi routinely applies to his engineering is evident in his wine making. “It really is so easy to do the right thing. Once I started it took all of my attention,” Pazzi explained.



Photo by Don Tateishi

*Bridge engineer Chuck Pazzi shows off his homemade wine that garnered a gold medal at the California State Fair.*

For example, Pazzi spent eight hours pulling all the berries off their stems because it improves the color, smoothness and taste of the wine.

His other secret is never to add water.

“It’s a question of not sacrificing quality over quantity,” said Pazzi.

From the half ton of grapes, Pazzi was able to squeeze out four cases of wine, a total of 48 bottles.

In addition to making the wine, Pazzi designed his own label. He used the design of an eagle that graces one side of the 1798 Silver Dollar. He replaced the olive branches in the eagle’s claw with grapes. The phrase “Nectar of Health” was substituted for “E Pluribus Unum.”

His label was eliminated from consideration for a medal because he had it printed out of state. “I think we had a real good chance of winning with the label. Unfortunately, the rules state that all work had to be done in California. I didn’t know that at the time and we had the label printed in Missouri,” he said.

One gold medal will not dim Pazzi’s interest in wine making. In fact, he has cast his sights on acquiring some white varietal seeds from the Crimean wine district in the Ukraine and planting them in the Sierra foothills.

“Who knows, maybe it would be good enough to earn a gold medal,” Pazzi said.

As for drinking his product, Pazzi enjoys an occasional glass but the “pleasure comes from knowing you made a good product that people will enjoy.”

## Exams Schedule

### The Caltrans Examination Office is providing the following examination information for November:

Associate Transportation Planner  
Bridge Architectural Assistant  
Landscape Technician  
Personnel Supervisor II  
Printing Trades Production Coordinator  
Program Technician III

### The following examinations allow for continuous filing:

Associate Right of Way Agent  
Caltrans Electrician I  
Caltrans Electrician II  
Caltrans Electrical Technician  
Caltrans Heavy Equipment Mechanic  
Data Processing Manager II  
Deputy Attorney, Caltrans  
Deputy Attorney III & IV, Caltrans  
Graduate Legal Assistant  
Litigation Specialist I & II  
Structural Design Technician  
Transportation Engineering Technician  
Transportation Surveyor, Caltrans  
Transportation Surveyor – Party Chief, Caltrans

### The following examinations allow for continuous filing on the Internet:

Environmental Planner (Natural Science)  
Landscape Associate  
Senior Environmental Planner  
Senior Right of Way Agent  
Senior Transportation Engineer, Caltrans  
Transportation Engineer (Civil)  
Transportation Engineer (Electrical)  
Transportation Planner

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